

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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FOUR CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF MACHINEGUNS

SPAULDING M.D. AND THREE ILLINOIS STATE POLICE TROOPERS

Edward E. McNally, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that **HAROLD M. GRIFFITHS**, age 69, of Spaulding, Illinois; **GREG R. MUGGE**, age 51, of Jerseyville, Illinois; **JAMES V. VEST**, age 39, of O'Fallon, Illinois; and **JOHN J. YARD**, age 36, of Collinsville, Illinois, were each charged in separate Criminal Complaints filed under seal on January 11, 2006, in the East St. Louis, Illinois division of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois with the unlawful possession of a machinegun.

The complaints were unsealed in court today. Copies are attached. *A criminal complaint is a formal charge against a defendant that is comprised of the essential facts constituting the offense charged. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.*

The violation allegedly committed by **GRIFFITHS** took place on or about October 12, 2005, in Madison County, Illinois. **GRIFFITHS**, a former resident of Glen Carbon, Illinois, is a medical doctor.

The violation allegedly committed by **MUGGE** took place on or about December 29, 2005, in Jersey County, Illinois. **MUGGE** is a Senior Master Trooper with the Illinois State Police, District 18 Headquarters, located in Litchfield, Illinois.

The violation allegedly committed by **VEST** took place on or about December 29, 2005, in St. Clair County, Illinois. **VEST** is a Sergeant with the Illinois State Police, District 11 Headquarters, located in Collinsville, Illinois.

The violation allegedly committed by **YARD** took place on or about October 12, 2005, in Madison County, Illinois. **YARD** is a Special Agent with the Illinois State Police, District 11 Headquarters, located in Collinsville, Illinois. **YARD** was previously assigned to the Public Corruption Task Force of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Fairview Heights, Illinois.

McNally observed that: "No one is above the law. If the United States obtains sufficient evidence that the law has been violated – whether by a law enforcement officer, any other public official, or a private person – they will be prosecuted, and justice administered fairly. That's why the Statue of Justice is blindfolded." He added: "The Illinois State Police (ISP) is one of the finest and most professional law enforcement organizations in the Nation, and the men and women who wear that uniform and risk their lives to protect Illinois families and communities deserve our respect and our thanks. Like the ATF and the FBI, ISP Director Larry Trent, ISP Internal Investigations and others at ISP have been fully cooperative and partners in these investigations."

Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent In Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, stated, "We consider the Illinois State Police our greatest ally in the battle against illegal interstate firearms trafficking and have the highest level of respect for the excellent law enforcement work that ISP agents and troopers perform on a daily basis. If anyone violates the Federal firearms laws, it is the responsibility of ATF to apprehend them and present them for criminal prosecution; it is truly unfortunate that these men charged today belong to that outstanding law enforcement organization, but their arrests should in no way reflect negatively on the Illinois State Police."

According to Weysan Dun, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI, Springfield Division, "The charges announced today reflect the shared commitment of the United States Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, the FBI and the Illinois State Police to thoroughly investigate and rigorously enforce the law regardless of who may be in violation. Law enforcement personnel not only must obey the laws they are sworn to enforce, but they are held to higher standards of conduct by their agencies."

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum penalty of ten years' imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, or both, and a term of supervised release of not more than three years.

The information contained in the complaint was obtained through an investigation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Illinois State Police, Department of Internal Investigations. The case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney James E. Crowe, III.